



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Baltimore District

Public Affairs Office

P.O. Box 1715

Baltimore, MD 21203

(410) 962-2809

Fax: (410) 962-3660

Media Advisory

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Contact: Doug Garman

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Phone: (410) 962-2809

Federal and local officials to celebrate beginning of Assateague Island restoration at special ceremony September 16

Baltimore – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, and the National Park Service will hold a ground breaking ceremony Sept. 16, at 10 a.m., at the U.S. Coast Guard Station in Ocean City, Md., to recognize the start of the Assateague Island Restoration Project.

Scheduled guest speakers include U.S. Senator Paul S. Sarbanes; U.S. Rep. Wayne T. Gilchrest; Col. Charles J. Fiala, Jr., Commander of the Corps' Baltimore District; Rebecca W. Watson, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management of the Department of Interior; and Dale Ditmanson, Associate Northeast Regional Director of the National Park Service.

To protect Assateague Island and restore its damaged habitat, a multi-agency team comprised of the Corps, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Mineral Management Service and many others are working together to construct a short-term and a long-term solution to this problem.

In the short-term plan approximately 1.8 million cubic yards of sand will be dredged from Great Gull Bank and placed on the northern portion of the island. A low storm berm will be built, and the beach widened to varying distances based on erosion rates. When finished, this \$13.2 million effort will mitigate the impacts caused by the jetties and restore the integrity of the island.

Because the Ocean City jetties and inlet continue to disrupt the flow of sand to Assateague, a long-term plan will be implemented. To mimic the natural transport of sand, a mobile bypass system will be used to remove sand trapped by the jetties and redirect it to the island. Dredging will occur each spring and fall at locations in and out of the inlet. The annual cost of this 25-year effort is \$2 million, which includes a monitoring program.

Editor's Note: To get a first-hand look at the dredging and sand placement operations, a boat trip, weather permitting, will be provided to officials and the media following the ceremony.

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